SOME SELECTIONS FROM THE Scriptures OF THE World Religions

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INTRODUCTION

The sublime principles taught by the great religions of the world have always saved mankind from self-destruction whenever they have been understood properly and practised sincerely. If these religions—some of which belong to the pre-historic eras—have survived to this day, it is mainly because of their great books in which are recorded these sublime principles revealed to their founders, prophets, messiahs, sages and saints.

How the book or the scripture has saved a religious community can be understood better by analysing the Sanskrit equivalent for the same, viz., 'śāstra'. A śāstra is that which protects (trāṇana) if its commands (śāsana) are adhered to: śāsanāt trāṇanāc caiva śāstramity abhidhīyate.

The book places before the members of the community a great ideal to be striven for. It gives them a code of conduct by following which they can maintain internal peace and harmony. It helps them to resolve their doubts and conflicts by offering them the necessary norms and standards. It is the fountain-head of eternal inspiration for the entire community.

Faith in and devotion to one's own religion does not oblige a man to denigrate other religions or dislike their followers. On the other hand a reverent study of other religions can enhance his faith and devotion to his own religion. After all, all religions teach, ultimately, the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man thereby obliging man to love his neighbour as himself.

Sri Ramakrishna declared that all religions ultimately lead to one and the same goal. Divergence of the paths does not mean divergence of the goals. Do not all the radii of a circle converge at its centre ?

This is the main purpose behind the selections chosen from the great scriptures of the world religions and presented through this booklet. If it generates in the heart of the reader veneration towards those great religions and rouses his curiosity to know more, the compiler feels rewarded.

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KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

		Sounds like			*Sounds like*
अ	a	o in son	ठ	ṭh	th in ant-hill
आ	ā	a in master	ड	ḍ	d in den
इ	i	i in if	ढ	ḍh	dh in godhood
ई	ī	ee in feel	ण	ṇ	n in under
उ	u	u in full	त	t	t in French
ऊ	ū	oo in boot	थ	th	th in thumb
ऋ	ṛ	somewhat between r an ri	द	d	th in then
			ध	dh	then in breathe
ए	e	ay in May	न	n	n in not
ऐ	ai	y in my	प	p	p in pen
ओ	o	o in oh	फ	ph	ph in loop-hole
औ	au	ow in now	ब	b	b in bag
क	k	k in keen	भ	bh	bh in abhor
ख	kh	ckh in blockhead	म	m	m in mother
ग	g	g (hard) in go	य	y	y in yard
घ	gh	gh in ghee	र	r	r in run
ङ	ṅ	ng in singer	ल	l	l in luck
च	c	ch (not k) chain	व	v	v in avert
छ	ch	chh in catch him	श	ś	sh in reich (German)
ज	j	j in judge	ष	s	sh in show
झ	jh	dgeh in hedgehog	स	s	s in sun
ञ	ñ	n (somewhat) as in French	ह	h	in hot
			ं	ṁ	m in sum
ट	ṭ	t tn ten	ः	h	h in half

HINDUISM

I ṚGVEDA

(3.62.10; 10.191.1 –4)

The Vedas are the basic scriptures of Hinduism. 'Veda' literally means knowledge or wisdom. It is also called 'śruti' which means 'what is heard or revealed'.

The Vedas are four in number: the Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda and the Atharvaveda.

The Ṛgveda, which is the oldest and the biggest, consists of hymns which are mostly prayers. The Yajurveda deals mainly with sacrificial rites. The Sāmaveda contains a portion of the Ṛgvedic hymns set to music. These have to be sung at appropriate stages during a sacrifice. The Atharvaveda, which is a later composition, consists mostly of moral and ethical codes as also a few worldly sciences.

The first of the following selections from the Ṛgveda is the famous gāyatrī-mantra. It is a wonderful prayer addressed to God the creator (using the sun as the symbol) for enlightening one's intellect.

The next four verses form the very last part of the Ṛgveda. They contain the exhortations of the leader ṛṣi to his followers given at the end of a successful sacrifice. Maintenance of unity and harmony is the main theme.

tatsavitur vareṇyaṁ
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ॥ (3.62.10)

'We meditate upon the excellent effulgence of god Savitṛ (the creator). May He guide our understanding !'

saṁsamidyuvase vṛṣannagne
viśvānyarya ā ।
iḷaspade samidhyase
sa no vasūnyā bhara ॥ (10.191.1)

'Agni, showerer (of choicest bounties), you who are the lord, have brought all beings together in close bond. you are kindled (by the ṛtviks) upon the footmark of Iḷa (the altar). Bring unto us riches !'

saṁ gacchadhvaṁ saṁ vadadhvaṁ
saṁ vo manāṁsi jānatām ।
devā bhāgaṁ yathā pūrve
sañjānānā upāsate ॥ (10.191.2)

'Meet together, talk together; let your minds apprehend alike; in like manner as the ancient gods, concurring, accepted their portion of the sacrifice.'

samāno mantraḥ samitiḥ samānī
samānaṁ manaḥ saha cittameṣām ।
samānaṁ mantram abhi mantraye vaḥ
samānena vo haviṣā juhomi ॥ (10.191.3)

'Common be the prayer of these (assembled worshippers), common be the acquirement, common the purpose, associated be the desire. I repeat for you a common prayer, I offer for you with a common oblation.'

samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ ।
samānamastu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati ॥
(10.191.4)

'Common, (worshippers), be your intention; common be (the wishes of) your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among you.'

II UPANIṢADS

'Upaniṣad' means that esoteric and sacred knowledge which destroys our ignorance of the Highest Truth (called Brahman), thereby loosens our worldly bonds and leads us to It.

The Upaniṣads usually form the last portions of the Vedic literature. Hence the name Vedānta.

Though the Upaniṣads are quite numerous, only ten of them are universally accepted as more ancient and authoritative : Īśāvāsya, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Aitareya, Taittirīya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya.

Īśāvāsyopaniṣad is one of the smallest in the series. The first two verses given here urge a man to aspire after living the full span of life in an active way but not forgetting that everything belongs to God, the All-pervading Spirit. He can certainly enjoy the good things of life but in a detached way.

Kaṭhopaniṣad which starts with the story of the young boy Naciketas is, perhaps, the most popular of the Upaniṣads.

In life, one is often faced with the difficult task of choosing between the good and the pleasant. The pleasant ultimately leads to bondage and suffering. The good, which may not be attractive, frees us from bondage and suffering. Hence it is wisdom to choose the good and reject the pleasant.

The Self or the Highest Truth obtained through the good is difficult to comprehend. It cannot be obtained through lectures or logic, intelligence or learning. It is only when a man has purified himself by good living, that he becomes fit to be instructed in the Self by a competent spiritual preceptor. When such a preceptor teaches, the Self reveals Itself to the disciple.

This is the gist of the selections given here.

The ancient system of Indian education made it obligatory for the disciple to live with the teacher during the period of training. At the end of the successful training, when the disciple was ceremonially taking leave of the teacher, it was customary for the latter to give him parting words of advice. The only piece of such an advice still extant in the Upaniṣadic literature is contained in the last section of the first chapter of the Taittirīyopaniṣad which is reproduced here.

In this 'Convocation Address' the teacher is advising his disciple to speak the truth, to honour his parents and to conduct himself according to the rules of dharma which he has learnt from the scriptures and the teacher. Whenever he is in doubt, he should observe his elders who are the competent authorities in the field, and imitate them.

(a) *Iśāvāsya* (*1 and 2*)

īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat ।
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ
mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam ॥ (1)

'(Know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God. Therefore find your enjoyment in renunciation; do not covet what belongs to others.'

kurvann eveha karmāṇi
jijīviṣet śataṁ samāḥ ।
evaṁ tvayi nānyatheto'sti
na karma lipyate nare ॥ (2)

'Always performing works here, one should wish to live a hundred years. If you live thus as a man, there is no way other than this by which karman (or deed) does not adhere to you.'

(b) *Kaṭha* (2. 1, 2, 9, 12, 23, 24)

anyac chreyo anyad utaiva preyas
te ubhe nānārthe puruṣaṁ sinītaḥ ।
tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati
hīyate'rthād ya u preyo vṛṇīte ॥ (2.1)

'(Yama said:) Different is the good, and different, indeed, is the pleasant. These two, with different purposes, bind a man. Of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good; but he who chooses the pleasant, fails of his aim.'

śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametas
tau samparītya vivinakti dhīraḥ ।
śreyo hi dhīro'bhi preyaso vṛṇīte
preyo mando yogakṣemād vṛṇīte ॥ (2.2)

'Both the good and the pleasant approach a man. The wise man, pondering over them, discrimi-

nates. The wise chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded, for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant.'

naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā
proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭha ।
yāṁ tvamāpas satyadhṛtir batāsi
tvādṛṅ no bhūyān naciketaḥ praṣṭā ॥ (2.9)

'Not by reasoning is this apprehension attainable, but dearest, taught by another, is it well understood. Thou hast obtained it, holding fast to truth. May we find, Naciketas, an inquirer like thee.'

taṁ durdarśaṁ gūḍham anupraviṣṭaṁ
guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭhaṁ purāṇaṁ ।
adhyātmayogādhigamena devaṁ
matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti ॥ (2.12)

'Realising through self-contemplation that primal God, difficult to be seen, deeply hidden, set in the cave (of the heart), dwelling in the deep, the wise man leaves behind both joy and sorrow.'

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena ।
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām ॥
(2.23)

'This self cannot be attained by instruction, nor by intellectual power, nor even through much hearing. He is to be attained only by the one whom the (self) chooses. To such a one the self reveals his own nature.'

nāvirato duścaritān nāśānto nāsamāhitaḥ ।
nāśāntamānaso vāpi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt ॥
(2.24)

'Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, nct he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed, can reach this (self) through right knowledge.'

(c) *Taittirīya* (1.11)

vedam anūcyācāryo'ntevāsinam anuśāsti । satyaṁ vada । dharmaṁ cara । svādhyāyān mā pramadaḥ । ācāryāya priyaṁ dhanamāhṛtya prajātantuṁ mā vyavacchetsīḥ । satyān na pramaditavyam । dharmān na pramaditavyam । kuśalān na pramaditavyam । bhūtyai na pramaditavyam । svādhyāya-pravacanābhyāṁ na pramaditavyam । devapitṛkāryābhyāṁ na pramaditavyam ।

'Having taught the Veda, the teacher instructs the pupil : Speak the truth. Practise virtue. Let there be no neglect of your (daily) reading. Having brought to the teacher the wealth that is

pleasing (to him), do not cut off the thread of the offspring. Let there be no neglect of truth. Let there be no neglect of prosperity. Let there be no neglect of study and teaching. Let there be no neglect of the duties to the gods and the fathers.'

mātṛdevo bhava । pitṛdevo bhava । ācāryadevo bhava । atithidevo bhava । yānyanavadyāni karmaṇi, tāni sevitavyāni । no itarāṇi । yānyasmākaṁ sucaritāni, tāni tvayopāsyāni । no itarāṇi ।

'Be one to whom the mother is a god. Be one to whom the father is a god. Be one to whom the teacher is a god. Be one to whom the guest is a god.

'Whatever deeds are blameless, they are to be practised, not others. Whatever good practices there are among us, they are to be adopted by you, not others.'

ye kecāsmacchreyāṁso brāhmaṇāh । teṣāṁ tvayā. sanena praśvasitavyam । śraddhayā deyam । aśraddhayā deyam । śriyā deyam । hriyā deyam । bhiyā deyam । saṁvidā deyam ।

'Whatever Brāhmaṇas there are (who are) superior to us, they should be comforted by you

with a seat. (What is to be given) is to be given with faith, should not be given without faith, should be given in plently, should be given with modesty, should be given with fear, should be given with sympathy.'

atha yadi te karma-vicikitsā vā vṛtta-vicikitsā vā syāt । ye tatra brāhmaṇās sammarśinaḥ । yuktā āyuktāh । alūkṣā dharmakāmās syuḥ । yathā te tatra varteran । tathā tatra vartethāḥ ।

'Then, if there is in you any doubt regarding any deeds, any doubt regarding conduct, you should behave yourself in such matters, as the Brāhmaṇas there (who are) competent to judge, devoted (to good deeds), not led by others, not harsh, lovers of virtue would behave in such cases.'

athābhyākhyāteṣu । ye tatra brāhmaṇās sammarśinaḥ । yuktā āyuktāḥ । alūkṣā dharmakāmās syuḥ । yathā te teṣu varteran । tathā teṣu vartethāḥ ।

'Then, as to the persons who are spoken against, you should behave yourself in such a way, as the Brāhmaṇas there, (who are) competent to judge, devoted (to good deeds), not led by others, not harsh, lovers of virtue, would behave in regard to such persons.'

eṣa ādeśaḥ । eṣa upadeśaḥ । eṣā vedopaniṣat । etadanuśāsanam । evam upāsitavyam । evam u caitad upāsyam॥

'This is the command. This is the teaching. This is the secret doctrine of the Veda. This is the instruction. Thus should one worship. Thus indeed should one worship.'

III GĪTĀ

(2.54 –72)

Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, better known as the Gīta, forms an integral part of the great epic Mahābhārata (Bhīṣmaparva, chapters 25–42). When Arjuna, the Pāṇḍava hero, became deluded and confused with regard to his duties on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Śrīkṛṣṇa, considered to be the incarnation of God Himself, taught him wisdom thereby dispelling his delusion.

The book runs into 700 verses spread over 18 chapters.

The selection given here is well-known as 'sthitaprajñalakṣaṇa' since it gives a fine discription of the characteristics of a man of steady-wisdom. These characteristics which are natural to a perfect man, can also be considered to be modes of sādhana by the spiritual aspirants.

arjuna uvāca

sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā
samādhisthasya keśava ।
sthitadhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta
kimāsīta vrajeta kim ॥ (54)

Arjuna said: 'What O Keśava, is the description of the man of steady wisdom, merged in samādhi? How (on the other hand) does the man of steady wtsdom speak, how sit, how walk ?

śrībhagavān uvāca

prajahāti yadā kāmān
sarvān pārtha manogatān ।
ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ
sthitaprajñas tadocyate ॥ (55)

The Blessed Lord said : 'When a man completely casts away, O Pārtha, all desires of the mind, satisfied in the self alone by the self, then is he said to be one of steady wisdom.'

duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ
sukheṣu vigataspṛhaḥ ।
vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ
sthitadhīr munirucyate ॥ (56)

'He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness, who has

become free from affection, fear, and wrath, is indeed the sage of steady wisdom.'

yas sarvatrānabhisnehas
tat tat prāpya śubhāśubham ।
nābhinandati na dveṣṭi
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ (57)

'He who is everywhere unattached, not pleased at receiving good, nor vexed at evil, his wisdom is fixed.'

yadā saṁharate cāyaṁ
kūrmo'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ ।
indriyāṇīndriyarthebhyas
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ (58)

'When also, like the tortoise withdrawing its limbs, he can completely withdraw the senses from their objects, then his wisdom becomes steady.'

viṣayā vinivartante
nirāhārasya dehinaḥ ।
rasavarjaṁ raso'pyasya
paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate ॥ (59)

'Objects fall away from the abstinent man, leaving the longing behind. But his longing also ceases, who sees the Supreme.'

yatato hyapi kaunteya
puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ ।
indriyāṇi pramāthīni
haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ ॥ (60)

'The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man, striving after perfection.'

tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya
yukta āsīta matparaḥ ।
vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ (61)

'The steadfast, having controlled them all, sits focussed on Me as the Supreme. His wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control.'

dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate ।
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ
kāmāt krodho'bhijāyate ॥ (62)

'Thinking of objects, attachment to them is formed in a man. From attachment longing, and from longing anger grows.'

krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ
saṁmohāt smṛtivibhramaḥ ।

smṛtibhramśād buddhināśo
buddhināśāt praṇaśyati ॥ (63)

'From anger comes delusion, and from delusion loss of memory. From loss of memory comes the ruin of discrimination, and from the ruin of discrimination he perishes.'

rāgadveṣaviyuktaistu
viṣayān indriyaiścaran ।
ātmavaśyair vidheyātmā
prasādamadhigacchati ॥ (64)

'But the self-controlled man, moving among objects with senses under restraint, and free from attraction and aversion, attains to tranquillity.'

prasāde sarvaduḥkhānāṁ
hānir asyopajāyate ।
prasannacetaso hyāśu
buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate ॥ (65)

'In tranquillity, all sorrow is destroyed. For the intellect of him, who is tranquil-minded, is soon established in firmness.'

nāsti buddhirayuktasya
na cāyuktasya bhāvanā ।
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntir
aśāntasya kutas sukham ॥ (66)

'No knowledge (of the self) has the unsteady. Nor has he meditation. To the unmeditative, there is no peace. And how can one without peace, have happiness ?'

indriyāṇāṁ hi caratāṁ
yanmano'nuvidhīyate ।
tadasya harati prajñāṁ
vāyur nāvamivāmbhasi ॥ (67)

'For, the mind, which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, carries away his discrimination, as a wind (carries away from its course) a boat on the waters.'

tasmād yasya mahābāho
nigṛhītānī sarvaśaḥ ।
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas
tastya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ (68)

'Therefore, O mighty-armed, his knowledge is steady, whose senses are completely restrained from their objects.'

yā niśā sarvabhūtānāṁ
tasyāṁ jāgarti saṁyami ।
yasyāṁ jāgrati bhūtāni
sā niśā paśyato muneḥ ॥ (69)

'That which is night to all beings, in that the self-controlled man is awake. That in which all beings are awake, is night to the sage (capable of) seeing the self.'

āpūryamāṇam acalapratiṣṭhaṁ
samudramāpaḥ praviśanti yadvat ।
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntimāpnoti na kāmakāmī ॥ (70)

'As into the ocean—brimful, and still—flow the waters, even so the sage into whom enter all desires, he, and not the desirer of desires, attains to peace.'

vihāya kāmān yas sarvān
pumāṁścarati nisspṛhaḥ ।
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ
sa śāntimadhigacchati ॥ (71)

'That man who lives devoid of longing, abandoning all desires, without the sense of "I" and "mine", he attains to peace.'

eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha
naināṁ prāpya vimuhyati ।
sthitvā'syāmantakāle'pi
brahmanirvāṇamṛcchati ॥ (72)

'This is to have one's being in Brahman, O son of Pṛthā. None, attaining to this, becomes deluded. Being established therein, even at the end of life, a man attains to oneness with Brahman.'

IV. MAHĀBHĀRATA

(Yakṣapraśna—Vanaparva—Ch. 313, Verses 47-50, 57-60, 69, 70, 73-76, 91-96, 107, 108, 117)

Mahābhārata, one of the two great epics of Hinduism, is the biggest didactic poem in the literature of the world. This book of one hundred thousand verses divided into eighteen sections or 'parvans', is a veritable encyclopaedia of Hinduism. Though it mainly deals with the conflict between two houses—the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas—there is no spiritual, religious, ethical or moral topic that has not been described or touched upon.

The Yakṣapraśna (a few selections of which are reproduced here) from the Vanaparva is in the form of a long conversation between tne Yakṣa (a demigod, who was none other than Yama) and Yudhiṣṭhira (the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas). It is a very interesting piece which deals with many subtle aspects of dharma.

yakṣa uvāca

kenasvic chrotriyo bhavati
kenasvid vindate mahat।

kenasvid dvitīyavān bhavati
rājan kena ca budhimān ॥ (47)

Yakṣa asked: 'By what does one become learned? By what does he attain what is very great? How can one have a second? And, O king, how can one acquire intelligence?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

śrutena śrotriyo bhavati
tapasā vindate mahat ।
dhṛtyā dvitīyavān bhavati
buddhiman vṛddhasevayā ॥ (48)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'It is by the study of the Vedas that a person becomes learned. It is by ascetic austerities that one acquires what is very great. It is by courage that a person acquires a second and it is by serving the elders that one becomes wise.'

yakṣa uvāca

kiṁ brāhmaṇānāṁ devatvaṁ
kaśca dharmaḥ satām iva ।
kaścaiṣāṁ mānuṣo bhāvaḥ
kimeṣāṁ asatāmiva ॥ (49)

Yakṣa asked: 'What constitutes the divinity of the brāhmaṇas? What even is their practice that is like that of the pious? What also is the

human attribute of the brāhmaṇas? And what practice of theirs is like that of the impious?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

svādhyāya eṣāṁ devatvaṁ
tapa eṣāṁ satāmiva।
maraṇaṁ mānuṣo bhāvaḥ
parivādo' satāmiva॥ (50)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'The study of the Vedas constitutes their divinity. Their asceticism constitutes behaviour that is like that of the pious. Their liability to death is their human attribute and slander is their impiety.'

yakṣa uvāca

indriyārthān anubhavan
buddhimān lokapūjitaḥ।
sammataḥ sarvabhūtānām
ucchvasan ko na jīvati॥ (57)

Yakṣa asked: 'What person, enjoying all the objects of the senses, endued with intelligence, regarded by the world and liked by all beings, though breathing, is not alive?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

devatātithibhṛtyānāṁ
pitṛṇāmātmanaśca yaḥ।

na nirvapati pañcānām
ucchvasan na sa jīvati ॥ (58)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'He who does not offer anything to these five: gods, guests, servants, manes and himself, he, though breathing, does not live.'

yakṣa uvāca

kiṁsvid gurutaraṁ bhūmeḥ
kiṁsvid uccataraṁ ca khāt ।
kiṁsvic chīghrataraṁ vāyoḥ
kiṁsvid bahutaraṁ tṛṇāt ॥ (59)

Yakṣa asked: 'What is weightier than the earth itself? What is higher than the heavens? What is fleeter than the wind? What is more numerous than grass?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

mātā gurutarā bhūmeḥ
khāt pitoccataras tathā ।
manaś śīghrataraṁ vātāt
cintā bahutarī tṛṇāt ॥ (60)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'The mother is weightier than the earth. The father is higher than the heaven. The mind is fleeter than the wind. And worry is more numerous than grass.'

yakṣa uvāca

kiṁsvid ekapadaṁ dharmyaṁ
kiṁsvid ekapadaṁ yaśaḥ ।
kiṁsvid ekapadaṁ svargyaṁ
kiṁsvid ekapadaṁ sukham ॥ (69)

Yakṣa asked: 'What is the highest refuge of virtue? What of fame? What of heaven? And what of happiness?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

dākṣyam ekapadaṁ dharmyaṁ
dānam ekapadaṁ yaśaḥ ।
satyam ekapadaṁ svargyam
śīlam ekapadaṁ sukham ॥ (70)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'Liberality is the highest refuge of virtue; gift, of fame; truth, of heaven; and good conduct, of happiness.'

yakṣa uvāca

dhanyānām uttamaṁ kiṁsvid
dhanānāṁ syāt kimuttamam ।
lābhānām uttamaṁ kiṁ syāt
sukhānāṁ syāt kimuttamam ॥ (73

Yakṣa asked: 'What is the best of all laudable things? What is the most valuable of all his

possessions? What is the best of all gains? And what is the best of all kinds of happiness?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

dhanyānām uttamaṁ dākṣyaṁ
dhanānām uttamaṁ śrutam ।
lābhānāṁ śreya ārogyaṁ
sukhānāṁ tuṣṭiruttamā ॥ (74)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'The best of all laudable things is skill. The best of all possessions is knowledge. The best of all gains is health. And, contentment is the best of all kinds of happiness.'

yakṣa uvāca

kaśca dharmaḥ paro loke
kaśca dharmaḥ sadāphalaḥ ।
kiṁ niyamya na śocanti
kaiśca sandhir na jīryate ॥ (75)

Yakṣa asked: 'What is the highest duty in the world? What is that virtue which always bears fruit? What is that, which if controlled, leads not to regret? And who are they with whom an alliance cannot break?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

ānṛśaṁsyaṁ paro dharmaḥ
trayīdharmaḥ sadāphalaḥ ।

mano yamya na śocanti
sandhis sadbhir na jīryate ॥ (76)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'The highest of duties is to refrain from injury. The rites ordained in the three (Vedas) always bear fruit. The mind, if controlled, leads to no regret. (And), an alliance with the good never breaks.'

yakṣa uvāca
kaś śatrur durjayaḥ puṁsāṁ
kaśca vyādhir anantakaḥ ।
kīdṛśaśca smṛtas sādhuḥ
asādhuḥ kīdṛśas smṛtaḥ ॥ (91)

Yakṣa asked: 'What enemy is invincible? What constitutes an incurable disease for man? What sort of a man is called honest and what dishonest?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
krodhas sudurjayaś śatrur
lobho vyādhir anantakaḥ ।
sarvabhūtahitas sādhur
asādhur nirdayas smṛtaḥ ॥ (92)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'Anger is an invincible enemy. Covetousness constitutes an incurable disease. He is honest who desires the weal of

all creatures and he is dishonest who is unmerciful.'

yakṣa uvāca

ko mohaḥ procyate rājan
kaśca mānaḥ prakīrtitaḥ ।
kimālasyaṁ ca vijñeyaṁ
kaśca śokaḥ prakīrtitaḥ ॥ (93)

Yakṣa asked: 'What O king is delusion? And what is pride? What also is to be understood by idleness? And what has been spoken of as grief?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

moho hi dharmamūḍhatvaṁ
mānas tvātmābhimānitā ।
dharmaniṣkriyatā''lasyaṁ
śokas tvajñānam ucyate ॥ (94)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'Delusion consists in not knowing one's duties. Thinking too much of oneself is pride. Idleness consists in not discharging one's duties. Ignorance is itself, grief.'

yakṣa uvāca

kiṁ sthairyam ṛṣibhiḥ proktaṁ
kiñca dhairyamudāhṛtam ।
snānañca kiṁ parāṁ proktaṁ
dānañca kim ihocyate ॥ (95)

Yakṣa asked: 'What has been called as steadiness by the ṛṣis and what as courage? What is the highest ablution? And what is described as charity?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

svadharme sthiratā sthairyam
dhairyam indriyanigrahaḥ।
snānaṁ manomalatyāgo
dānaṁ vai bhūtarakṣaṇam॥ (96)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'Steadiness consists in being well-established in the performance of one's duties. Subjugation of senses is (real) courage. Ablution consists in the washing of all impurities of the mind. Protecting all creatures is charity.'

yakṣa uvāca

rājan kulena vṛttena
svādhyāyena śrutena vā।
brāhmaṇyaṁ kena bhavati
prabrūhyetat suniścitam॥ (107)

Yakṣa asked: 'By what, O king, birth, conduct, study or learning, does a person become a brāhmaṇa?'

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

śṛṇu yakṣa kulaṁ tāta
na svādhyāyo na ca śrutam ।
kāraṇaṁ hi dvijatve ca
vṛttameva na saṁśayaḥ ॥ (108)

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: 'Listen O Yakṣa! It is neither birth nor study nor learning that is the cause of brāhmaṇahood; without doubt, it is conduct that constitutes it.'

tarko'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā
naiko ṛṣir yasya mataṁ pramāṇam ।
dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ
mahājano yena gatas sa panthāḥ ॥ (117)

'Argument leads to no definite conclusion. The śrutis differ from one another. There is not even one ṛṣi whose opinion can be accepted as authority (by all). The truth about religion and duty is hidden in the caves. Therefore that alone is the path along which the great have trod.'

V. ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM

(Skandha 11, Chapter 19, Verses 33–45)

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam though classed among the Purāṇas (mythology) is in no way less important than the Gītā.

It holds a very high place in the Hindu tradition as an authority on bhakti. But the beauty of this work is that it has maintained a perfect harmony between jñāna (knowledge) aud bhakti (devotion).

Comprising 18,000 verses spread over twelve sections or skandhas, the Bhāgavatam is a fairly voluminous work. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the central figure whose life and deeds are depicted in detail in the tenth and eleventh skandhas.

On the eve of his departure from the arena of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa gives his parting instructions to his beloved devotee and disciple, Uddhava. This section, known as the Uddhava Gītā, contains the quintessence of the Lord's teachings and deals with a variety of spiritual subjects.

The verses presented here are taken from the Uddhava Gītā. They contain the Lord's answers to Uddhava's questions concerning certain yogic disciplines as well as ethical, moral and spiritual principles.

śrībhagavān uvāca

ahiṁsā satyam asteyam
asaṅgo hrīr asañcayaḥ ।
āstikyaṁ brahmacaryañca
maunaṁ sthairyaṁ kṣamā'bhayam ॥ (33)

The Lord said: 'Non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-attachment, modesty, non-accumu-

lation of wealth faith in God, chastity, silence, patience, forgiveness, fearlessness.'

śaucaṁ japastapo homaḥ
śraddhā''tithyam madarcanam ।
tīrthāṭanaṁ parārthehā
tuṣṭir ācāryasevanam ॥ (34)

'Purity of mind and body, repetition of the Lord's name, austerity, offering of oblations in the sacred fire, faith in one's self, hospitality, worship of Me, visiting of holy places, working for the good of others, contentment and service unto the teacher.'

ete yamās saniyamā
ubhayor dvādaśa smṛtāḥ ।
puṁsām upāsitās tāta
yathākāmaṁ duhanti hi ॥ (35)

'These groups of twelve virtues enumerated in the above two verses constitute the yamas and the niyamas. These, my friend, if rightly practised by men, surely produce results according to their desires.'

śamo mannişṭhatā buddher
dama indriyasaṁyamaḥ ।

titikṣā duḥkhasaṁmarṣo
jihvopasthajayo dhṛtiḥ ॥ (36)

'Calmness is a steady attachment of the mind to Me. Self-control is control of the sense-organs. Fortitude is the bearing of grief. Patience is a perfect control over the palate and sex-impulse.'

daṇḍanyāsaḥ paraṁ dānaṁ
kāmatyāgas tapas smṛtam ।
svabhāvavijayaś śauryaṁ
satyañca samadarśanam ॥ (37)

'The highest charity is the relinquishing of the idea of violence towards beings. Penance is the giving up of desires. Valour is the conquest of one's nature. Honesty is looking upon everything with an equal eye.'

ṛtaṁ ca sūnṛtā vāṇī
kavibhiḥ parikīrtitā ।
karmasvasaṅgamaś śaucaṁ
tyāgas saṁnyāsa ucyate ॥ (38)

'Truthfulness is true and agreeable speech which the sages praise. Purity is non-attachment to work, and renunciation is the giving up of work.'

dharma iṣṭaṁ dhanaṁ nṛṇāṁ
yajño'haṁ bhagavattamah ।

dakṣiṇā jñānasandeśaḥ
prāṇāyāmaḥ paraṁ balam ॥ (39)

'Religion is that wealth which men may covet. I, the Supreme Lord, am the sacrifice. The imparting of knowledge is religious remuneration. The highest strength is the control of prāṇa.'

bhago me aiśvaro bhavo
lābho madbhaktiruttamaḥ ।
vidyā''tmani bhidābādho
jugupsā hrīr akarmasu ॥ (40)

'Fortune is my Divine State. The best profit is devotion to Me. Knowledge is the destruction of the idea of multiplicity in the self. Shyness is abhorrence of evil deeds.'

śrir guṇā nairapekṣyādyāḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhasukhātyayaḥ ।
duḥkhaṁ kāmasukhāpekṣā
paṇḍito bandhamokṣavit ॥ (41)

'Beauty consists in virtues such as spirit of independence. Happiness is the transcending of pleasure and pain. Misery is the hankering after sense-pleasures. A scholar is one who can distinguish between bondage and liberation.'

mūrkho dehādyahaṁbuddhiḥ
panthā mannigamas smṛtaḥ ।
utpathaścittavikṣepaḥ
svárgas sattvaguṇodayaḥ ॥ (42)

'A fool is one who identifies himself with the body etc. The right way is that which leads to Me. The wrong way is that which causes disturbance of the mind. Heaven is the rise of sattva in the mind.'

narakas tama unnāho
bandhur gurur ahaṁ sakhe ।
gṛhaṁ śarīraṁ mānuṣyam
guṇāḍhyo hyāḍhya ucyate ॥ (43)

'Hell is the rise of tamas in the mind. The teacher, who is no other than Myself, is the friend (O Uddhava). The human body is the home. He indeed is called rich, who is rich in virtues.'

daridro yastvasantuṣṭaḥ
kṛpaṇo yo'jitendriyaḥ ।
guṇeṣvasaktadhīrīśo
guṇasaṅgo viparyayaḥ ॥ (44)

'One who is discontented is poor. He who is not a master of his senses is mean. One who is

not attached to sense-objects is lordly. One who is attached to sense-objects is the reverse of him.'

eta uddhava te praśnāḥ
sarve sādhu nirūpitāḥ ।
kiṁ varṇitena bahunā
lakṣaṇaṁ guṇadoṣayoḥ ।
guṇadoṣadṛṣṭir doṣo
guṇastūbhayavarjitaḥ ॥ (45)

'Here, O Uddhava, I have fully answered all your questions. Well, what is the use of dilating on the characteristics of merit and defect? Defect is distinguishing between merit and defect; and to be free from both is merit.'

VI. YOGA SŪTRAS OF PATAÑJALI

(Pāda 1, sus. 2, 12, 13, 14, 15 ; Pāda 2, su. 1)

The 'Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali' is the most authoritative and well-organised ancient treatise on the science of yoga. It consists of 195 aphorisms spread over four chapters, the subject matter of these four being samādhi (superconscious experience), sādhana (means of attaining yoga), vibhūti (supernatural powers) and kaivalya (liberation).

The selections offered here are so chosen as to give us a definition of yoga and the primary steps leading to it.

yogaś-cittavṛtti-nirodhaḥ ॥ (2)

'Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (citta) from taking various forms (vṛttis).'

abhyāsa-vairāgyabhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ ॥ (12)

'Their control is by practice and non-attachment.'

tatra sthitau yatno'bhyāsaḥ ॥ (13)

'Continuous struggle to keep them (the vṛttis) perfectly restrained is practice.'

sa tu dīrghakāla-nairantarya-satkāra-āsevito dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ ॥ (14)

'It (the practice) becomes firmly grounded when it has been cultivated for a long time, uninterruptedly, with earnest devotion.'

dṛṣṭa-ānuśravika-viṣaya-vitṛṣṇasya vaśīkāra-saṁjñā vairāgyam ॥ (15)

'Non-attachment designated as 'Vaśīkāra' will arise in him who has no thirst for objects (of enjoyment) seen or heard.'

tapas-svādhyāya-īśvarapraṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ ॥ (2.1)

'Austerity, study and the dedication of the fruits of one's works to God -(these are called) kriyāyoga.'

VII. NĀRADA BHAKTISŪTRAS
(Sus. 12, 35, 38, 43, 44, 45, 69)

There are two treatises on devotion, written in the form of sūtras: Śāṇḍilya Bhaktisūtras and Nārada Bhaktisūtras. Between the two, the latter is much more popular for the simple reason that it is very simple and practical. Apart from defining devotion and describing its various forms, the work gives several invaluable hints for practice, warns against the pitfalls in spiritual life, eulogises the importance of devotion, gives its special features to enable the aspirants to imitate them, and finally paints a vivid picture of the ideal devotees.

The following selections deal mainly with the need for renunciation of worldly pleasures and shunning evil company.

bhavatu niścayadārḍhyād ūrdhvaṁ śāstrarakṣaṇam ॥ (12)

'Even after one is well-established (in the love of God) the scriptures are to be protected.'

tat tu viṣayatyāgāt saṅgatyāgācca ॥ (35)

'But that (Supreme devotion is obtained by) the renunciation of sense-objects as well as attachment to them.'

mukhyatastu mahatkṛpayaiva bhagavatkṛpāleśād vā ॥ (38)

'Primarily, it is got only through the grace of great souls or through a slight measure of divine grace.'

dussaṅgaḥ sarvathaiva tyājyaḥ ॥ (43)

'Evil company must be shunned by all means.'

kāma-krodha-moha-smṛtibhraṁśa-buddhināśa-sarva-nāśa-kāraṇatvāt ॥ (44)

'For, it leads to the rousing up of desire, anger and delusion, to loss of memory, to loss of discrimination, and to utter ruin in the end.'

taraṅgāyitā apīme samudrāyante ॥ (45)

'Though they rise only in the form of ripples (in the beginning), they become like a veritable sea (as a result of evil company).'

tīrthīkurvanti tīrthāni, sukarmīkurvanti karmāṇi, sacchāstrīkurvanti śāstrāṇi ॥ (69)

'(They) impart sanctity to places of pilgrimage, render actions righteous and good, and give authority to the scriptures.'

BUDDHISM

DHAMMAPADA

(Ch. 14, Buddhavaggo, verses 4-14 or 182-192)

Tipiṭakas (literally, 'three basketfuls of teaching') are the basic scriptures of Buddhism. They are (a) Vinayapiṭaka (b) Suttapiṭaka (c) Abhidhammapiṭaka. The first gives a detailed code of conduct for the monastic life, the second deals with the explanations of the subtle points of dhamma (religion) and the last is concerned with philosophy.

Dhammapada forms the second section of the Khuddaka Nikāya which itself is the fifth book of the Suttapiṭaka. Literally, Dhammapada means the path of dhamma. This little book of 423 verses in exquisite Pāli language has often been compared to the Gītā. A good number of topics dealing with ethical and moral principles as also directions for a good life are included in this tiny work.

The following verses taken from this book extol the greatness of human birth and exhort men to utilise this opportunity by seeking refuge in dhamma only.

kiccho manussapaṭilābho
kiccham maccānajīvitam ।
kiccham saddhammasavaṇam
kiccho buddhānamuppādo ॥ (182)

'Rare is the human birth, arduous is mortal life, arduous is the hearing of the law (and) rare the uprising of Buddhas.'

sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṁ
kusalassa upasaṁpadā ।
sacittapariyodapanam
etaṁ buddhāna sāsanam ॥ (183)

' "Eschew all evil, cherish good, cleanse your inmost thoughts"—this is the teaching of the Buddhas.'

khantī paramaṁ tapo titikkhā
nibbāṇaṁ paramaṁ vadanti buddhā ।
na hi pabbajito parūpaghātī
samaṇo hoti paraṁ viheṭhayanto ॥ (184)

'The awakened call patience the highest penance and the (long) suffering the highest nibbāṇa. For, he is no recluse who harms others, nor is he an ascetic (samaṇa) who causes grief to others.'

anūpavādo anūpaghāto
pātimokkhe ca saṁvaro ।
mattaññutā ca bhattasmiṁ
pantaṁ ca sayanāsanaṁ ।
adhicitte ca āyogo
etaṁ buddhāna sāsanam ॥ (185)

'Not to blame, not to strike, to live restrained under the law, to be moderate in eating, to dwell in solitude, i.e., to have one's bed and seat in solitude and to dwell on the highest thoughts—this is the teaching of the Awakened.'

na kahāpaṇavassena
titti kāmesu vijjati ।
appāsādā dukkhā kāmā
iti viññāya paṇḍito ॥ (186)

'Not by a shower of gold coins is the satisfaction of the senses found. He is wise who knows that lusts have a short taste and cause pain.'

api dibbesu kāmesu
ratiṁ so nādhigacchati ।
taṇhakkhayarato hoti
sammāsaṁbuddhasāvako ॥ (187)

'The follower of the Fully Awakened one finds no delight even in the divine pleasures; but his joy is in the destruction of desires.'

bahu ve saraṇaṁ yanti
pabbatāni vanāni ca ।
āramarukkhacetyāni
manussā bhayatajjitā ॥ (188)

'Often do men, driven by fear, go to many a refuge, to mountains and forests, to groves and sacred trees.'

netaṁ kho saraṇam khemaṁ
netaṁ saraṇamuttamam ।
netaṁ saraṇamāgaṃma
sabbadukkhā pamuccati ॥ (189)

'But, that is not a safe and best refuge. A man is not delivered from all pains after having gone to that refuge.'

yo ca buddhaṁ ca dhammaṁ ca
saṅghaṁ ca saraṇam gato ।
cattāri ariyasaccāni
saṃmappaññāya passati ॥ (190)

'He who takes refuge with the Buddha, the Law and the Saṅgha, sees the Four Noble Truths with clear understanding.'

dukkhaṁ dukkhasamuppādaṁ
dukkhassa ca atikkamam ।
ariyaṁ caṭṭhaṅgikaṁ maggaṁ
dukkhūpasamagāminam ॥ (191)

'The Four Noble Truths—viz., pain, the origin of pain, the cessation of pain, and the noble eightfold path that leads to the quieting of the pain.'

etaṁ kho saraṇam khemaṁ
etaṁ saraṇamuttamam ।
etaṁ saraṇamāgamma
sabbadukkhā pamuccati ॥ (192)

'That is the safe and best refuge. Having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain.'

JAINISM

SŪTRAKṚTĀṄGA SŪTRA
(1.2.1.10-14)

The sacred scriptures of Jainism are usually called Āgamas (precepts) or Siddhāntas (treatises). These Āgamas are divided into two broad groups : śrutāṅgas and upāṅgas. The śrutāṅgas are supposed to be twelve, though the twelfth is not available now. However the upāṅgas which are also twelve in number are fully available.

The Sūtrakṛtāṅga is the second of the śrutāṅgas. It is one of the oldest of the Jain scriptures. It begins with a refutation of heretical doctrines which is then followed by discussions of the holy life, the difficulties which monks have to overcome, punishments which befall the unholy and praise of Mahāvīra.

The following selections advise a man to cease from sins since life is short, and exhort him to cultivate self-control.

purisorama pāvakammuṇā
paliyantaṁ manuyāṇa jīvitam ।
sannā iha kāmamucchiyā
mohaṁ janti narā asaṁvudā ॥ (10)

'Man, cease from sins! For the life of men will come to an end. Men who are drowned (in

lust as it were), and addicted to pleasure will, for want of control, be deluded.'

jayayaṁ viharāhi jogavaṁ
aṇupāṇā panthā durutarā ।
aṇusāsaṇameva pakkame
virehiṁ samaṁ paveiyam ॥ (11)

'Exert and control yourself! For it is not easy to walk on ways where there are minutely small animals. Follow the commandments which the Arhats have well proclaimed.'

virayā vīrā samuṭṭiyā
kohakāyariyāi pīsaṇā ।
pāṇe ṇa haṇanti savvāso
pāvāā virayā'bhinivvuḍā ॥ (12)

'Heroes (of faith) who desist (from sins) and exert themselves aright, who subdue wrath, fear etc., will never kill living beings; they desist from sins and are entirely happy.'

ṇavitā ahameva luppae
luṁpanti loyaṁmi pāṇiṇo ।
evaṁ sahiehiṁ pāsae
ahiṇe ṇihe se puṭṭhe ahiyāsae ॥ (13)

'It is not myself alone who suffers, all creatures in the world suffer; this a wise man should

consider, and he should patiently bear (such calamities) as befall him, without giving way to his passions.'

dhūṇiyā kuliyaṁ va levavaṁ
kisae deha maṇasaṇāihi ।
avihiṁsāmeva pavvae
aṇudhammo muṇiṇā paveio ॥ (14)

'As a wall covered with a plastering (of dried cowdung) is by a shock made thin, so (a monk) should make his body lean by fasting etc. He should abstain from slaughter of living beings. This is the Law proclaimed by the sage.'

SIKHISM

JAPJI

(Mūlmantra, verses 1, 2, 4, 13, 15)

The holy scriptures of Sikhism, the youngest of world religions, are two in number: the Ādi Granth and the Daśam Granth. The former was compiled by the fifth Guru, Arjun Dev. The latter, a collection of miscellaneous hymns was composed and compiled by the tenth Guru, Govind Singh.

The Ādi Granth or Guru Granth Sāhib, contains the hymns of the first five Gurus, with a few selections from the hymns of different contemporary saints. The teachings of Guru Nānak, the founder, are contained in this Ādi Granth.

It begins with the Japu or Japji, the great morning prayer of the Sikhs. This gives the epitome of the doctrines of Sikhism of which, the rest of the Granth, is only a commentary. It begins with the famous Mūl mantra followed by 38 stanzas and 38 pauris (or rungs of ladder), finally ending with a śloka which forms the epilogue.

The Japji deals with five stages through which an individual soul has to pass, on its way to the realisation of God.

The verses chosen here stress the importance of God's grace, urge the followers to meditate on Him in

the ambrosial hours of morning and describe the wonderful results of satiating one's mind with God.

Mūlmantra

ek oṅkar sati nāmu kartā
purukhu, nirbhau nirvairu,
akālamūrati, ajuni, saibhan,
guru prasādi ॥

'The One and only, the Infinite One, the Eternal, the Spirit, the Creator ;

The All-pervading, the Sovereign Lord, the Harmonious, the Timeless Immortal ;

The Supreme Being, the Unincarnated, the Self-existent ;

He is worshipped by the grace of the Guru.'

Verse One

The purity of mind cannot be achieved by bathing, even if one bathes a hundred thousand times.

The quietude of mind cannot be achieved by vow of silence, even if one goes into deep trance.

The fasting does not satiate the hunger for worldly goods, even if one has all the riches of the world.

Not one out of a hundred thousand devices and contrivances works to achieve unity with Him.

How is the truth, unity with God, to be attained? How is the veil of falsehood to be torn aside?

Verse Two

His Hukam, Divine Order cannot be described : by His order is all form created.

By His order is all life created ; by His order is greatness obtained.

By His order some are high, others low ; in accordance with His order some get pain, others pleasure.

Through His order, one is blessed and attains union with God, and the other is condemned to everlasting transmigration.

All are subject to His order, and none is beyond the pale of its authority.

If one comprehends His order, he is purged of his ego, self-centredness.

Verse Four

God is eternal, so is His discipline.

His creation begs to Him, 'Give us', Give us' ; the Giver gives His gifts,

Then what should we offer whereby we may have vision of Him?

What words should we utter that may evoke His love.

At the ambrosial hours of the morning, meditate on God—the true name—and converse on His greatness.

By one's actions one achieves the robe of honour, and achieves salvation through His acceptance.

That is the way to recognise God, who is All-pervading.

Verse Thirteen

A man whose mind is satiated in God acquires wisdom, consciousness and understanding ;

He acquires the inner knowledge of all spheres of the universe :

He does not suffer the punishment of transmigration,

And does not fear death, and achieves salvation.

Such is the result of meditation on the immaculate God,

If one worships Him with full concentration of mind,

Verse Fifteen

A man whose mind is satiated in God, reaches (while alive) the gate of salvation ;

And saves his kith and kin :

He achieves communion with God, and also saves his disciples (by showing them the true way),

And does not wander in transmigration.

Such is the result of meditation on the immaculate God,

If one worships Him with full concentration of mind.

ZOROASTRIANISM

YĀSNA
(50.4, 5, 6, 7, 10)

The sacred writings of Zoroastrianism are known under the general title of 'Zend Avesta or 'Avesta', meaning 'knowledge'. The earliest and most important section is the 'Yāsna', meaning 'worship or sacrifice'. Interlaced within the Avesta are also the 'Gāthās' or psalms, 17 in number, believed to have been composed by Zoroaster himself. 'Visperad' is a small section of the Avesta, containing litanies and invocations. Another section, the 'Vendidad' is a handbook for priests containing religious laws and mythical tales. The 'Khorda-Avesta' (the little Avesta) is a devotional handbook, used by all true Zoroastrians.

The Yāsna is the most important liturgy of this religion. Here are found confessions, invocations, prayers, exhortations and praises.

The verses presented here are mostly prayers.

At Vāo yazāi stavas, Mazdā Ahurā ।
hadā Ashā Vahishtā chā Mananghahā ।
kshathrā -chā yā isho staonghahat ā -paithi ।
ākāo aredreng demāne garo seraoshāne ॥ (4)

'Therefore, O Ahurā Mazdā, I shall offer (my) worship, glorifying Thee, through (the pursuit by me of) (Thy) Divine Law, as well as (by the use of Thy) Most Excellent Divine Intelligence and (Thy) Divine Power, Glory and Will, whereby (Thy) aspirant on the path (leading to Thee) may become steadfast (and) can hearken (the inner yearnings) of (Thy) distinguished devotees (endeavouring to reach Thy) House of Songs.

Aroi zi kshmā Mazdā, Ashā Ahurā ।
hyat yushmākāi Mānthrāne vaorazathā ।
aibi-dereshtā āvishyā Avanghahā ।
zastāishtā yā-nāo khātre dāyāt ॥ (5)

'Being assured, indeed, by Thee O Ahurā Mazdā, may Thy (devotee) (contemplating on) (Thy) Master Thoughts, be made to rejoice in (Thy) Law Divine ; whereby in accord with (Thy) Powerful (and) Unmistakable Aid, (he) may consistently (with the acts of his hands) dispense, unto us, (Thy) Blessings of Prosperity.'

ye Mānthrā vāchem Mazdā baraiti ।
urvatho Ashā Nemanghahā, Zarathushtro ।
Dātā khrateush hizvo raithim stoi ।
'mahyā rāzeng Vohu sahit Mananghahā' ॥ (6)

'When Zārathūshtrā, (the ponderer over Thy) Master Thoughts, (Thy) friend in righteousness (and) veneration, gives utterances to (his) speech, (then) O Mazdā, do (Thou) grant (unto him) the sweetness and facility of speech (of the tongue) (fraught) with Wisdom, in this existence. (Said the Lord):—"*With Noble Divine Intelligence*, he (Zārathūshtra) shall proclaim my commandments."

At ve yaojā Zevishtayeng aurvato ।
Jayaish perethush Vahmahyā yushmākahyā ।
Mazdā, Ashā ugreng Vohu Mananghahā ।
Yaish azāthā mahmāi khyātā Avanghahe ॥ (7)

'O Mazdā, (vitalised) by Righteousness (and the promptings) (of Thy) Powerful, Noble, Divine Intellegence (I) shall, indeed, focus attention on Thee, through methods speedy (and) victorious (and) most worthy of veneration for Thy Adorations; so that (Thou) may (always) lead (me) (to my goal), (and) be to me (my eternal) source (and Fountain) of help.'

At yā Vareshā, yā -chā pairi aish shyaothnā ।
yā -chā Vohu chashmām arejat Mananghahā ।
Raochāo kheng asnām ukhshā aerushi ।
Khshmākāi Ashā Vahmāi Mazdā Ahurā । (10)

'Then, whatever deeds (of virtue) I do (hereafter) and whatever (I may have done) before this, as well as whatever is done through the promptings of) (the) Noble Divine Intelligence, (which are) of merit in (Thy) vision (as are) the shining Lights, the Suns, (the) earliest appearance of days (dawns) rotating (in the firmament), (through Thy) Law Divine, (are all indicative) of adorations due to Thee, O Mazdā Ahurā.'

CHRISTIANITY

The Bible, the Christian scripture, is divided into two books : The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Pentateuch or the five books of the Law are the most important part of the Old Testament. These were revealed to Moses.

The Decalogue or the Ten Commandments, taken from the Exodus of the Old Testament, contain the cardinal summary of Divine Law, given by God to the Prophet Moses on the Mt. Sinai. They are of primary importance in the ethical systems of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Four Gospels according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, are the main texts of the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount taken from the St. Matthew (Chapters 5–7) represents the quintessence of the Christian teaching. Only the first selection, known as the Beatitudes, is given here. The text is so charmingly simple and direct that it needs no explanation.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20.2-17)

'You shall have no other gods before me.'

'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in

heaven above, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.'

'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God, in it you should not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day, therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

'Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.'

'You shall not kill.'

'You shall not commit adultery.'

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.'

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house: you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's.'

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Sermon on the Mount

The Beatitudes

(St. Matthew 5: 1-12)

And seeing the multitudes. he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying.....

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

ISLAM

THE QUR'ĀN

(Suras 2.44, 5.9, 9.23-24, 17.53, 59.20-24, 112.1-4)

The Qur'ān, the Sunna, the Ijma and the Qias are the four sources from which the precepts and doctrines of Islam are derived. Out of these, the Qur'ān is the fundamental scripture containing the revelations Prophet Muhammad received from Allāh or God.

It is divided into 114 suras or chapters. The first sura is the famous prayer Al Fateha. The remaining 113 suras are arranged in the order of their length, the first having 286 verses and the last having only 3 verses.

The following selections, chosen at random stress the need for righteousness and kindness, urge men to shun disbelievers, and describe the greatness of Allāh.

2.44: 'Enjoin ye righteousness upon mankind while ye yourselves forget (to practise it? And ye are readers of the Scripture! Have ye then no sense?

5.9: 'O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allāh in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty.

Observe your duty to Allāh. Lo! Allāh is informed of what ye do.'

9.23-24: 'O ye who believe! Choose not your fathers nor your brethren for friends if they take pleasure in disbelief rather than faith. Whoso of you taketh them for friends, such are wrong-doers.'

'Say: If your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your tribe, and the wealth ye have acquired, and merchandise for which ye fear that there will be no sale, and dwellings ye desire are dearer to you than Allāh and His messenger and striving in His way; then wait till Allāh bringeth His command to pass. Allāh guideth not wrong doing folk.'

17.53: 'Tell my bondmen to speak that which is kindlier! Lo! The devil soweth discord among men. Lo! The devil is for man an open foe!'

59.20-24: 'Not equal are the owners of the Fire and the owners of the Garden. The owners of the garden, they are the victorious.'

'If we had caused this Qur'ān to descend upon a mountain, thou verily hadst seen it humbled, rent as under by the fear of Allāh.

Such similitudes coin we for mankind that haply they may reflect.'

'He is Allāh, than whom there is no other God, the Knower of the the Invisible and the Visible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.'

'He is Allāh, than whom there is no other God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb. Glorified be Allāh from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him .'

'He is Allāh, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.'

112.1-4 : 'Say : He is Allāh the One!'

'Allāh, the eternally Besought of all!'

'He begetteth not, nor was begotten.'

'And there is none comparable unto Him.'

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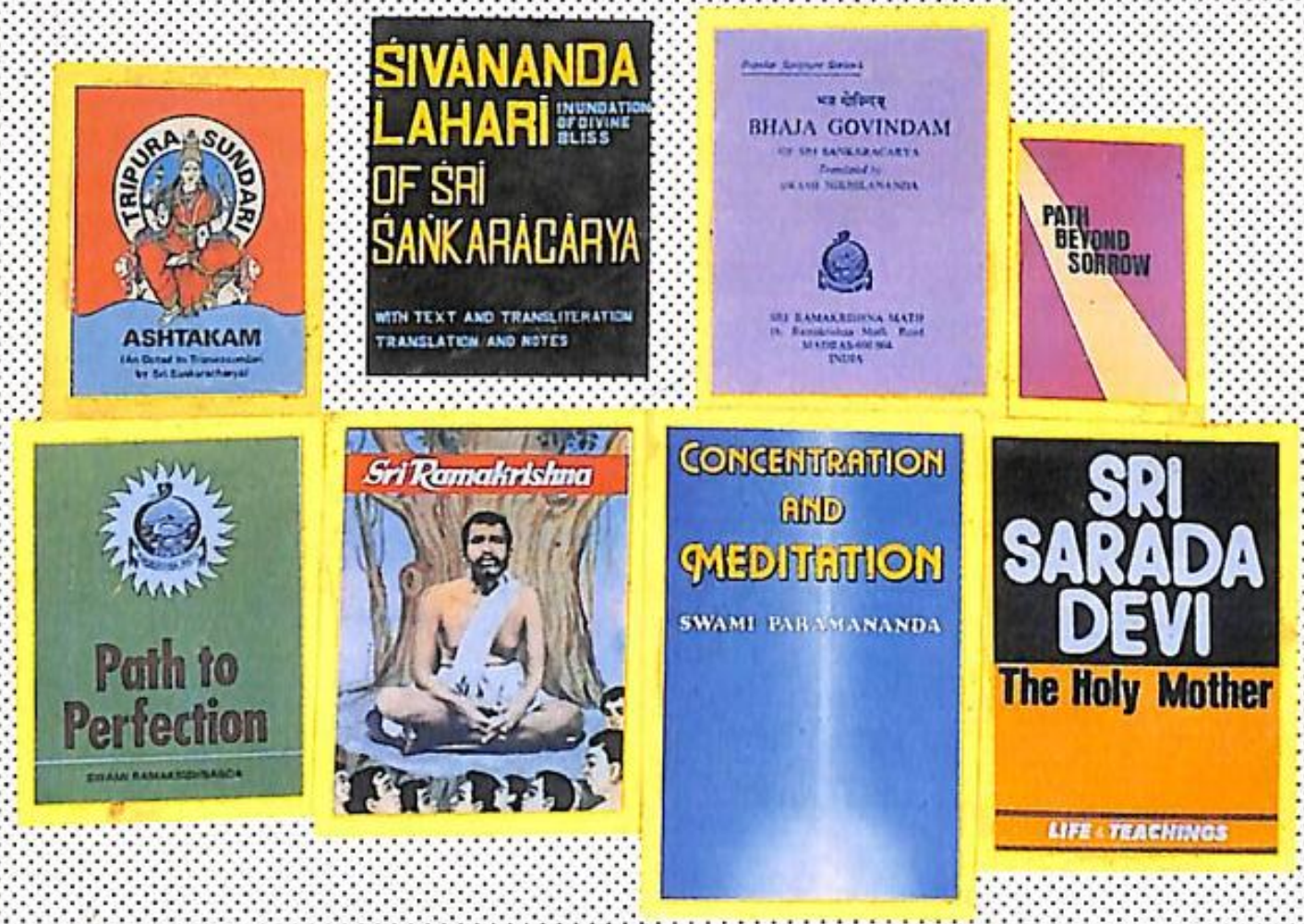

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